

PLO would respect the terms of the 1969 Cairo Agreement. With the knowledge of Muslim and Christian leaders, Lebanese President Sulieman Frangieh and Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Halim Khaddam worked out a seventeen-point programme, which was presented to the country on 14 February 1976. The plan was a compromise platform that sought to define a new partnership between Muslims and Christians by readjusting the sectarian system of political representation.

The document called for, among other changes, the affirmation of the present sectarian distribution of political posts, an equal distribution of parliamentary seats between Muslims and Christians, the abolition of the distribution of government posts on a confessional basis, and the decentralization of the civil service. As Faris stated: "It was rejected by Kamal Joumlatt, who sought the total secularization of the political system ... [and later] by Bashir Gemayel who wanted to secure a position of unchallenged hegemony for the Maronite community." Although the document never became law, Faris argued that it set the direction for a future compromise agreement. It is notable, however, that the document addressed neither the external dimensions of the conflict nor the role of the Palestinians in Lebanon.

#### 1976 -- 1982

There were two principal attempts to mediate the conflict during the period 1976 to 1982: the Arab League summits (at Riyadh and Cairo in 1976) and President Sarkis' Fourteen Points for National Reconciliation (1980).

Although the Arab League's mediating role began fairly early in the war, it did not gain momentum until Syria, Egypt, and the PLO seemingly reconciled their differences concerning PLO latitude in Lebanon. Syrian presence at the Riyadh and Cairo summits reflected the tacit recognition by Egypt and the Arab League of Syria's predominant role in Lebanon. The decisions approved at the summits included an Arab guarantee of Lebanon's sovereignty, unity, and independence; the creation of an Arab Deterrent Force